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UNCLAS BOGOTA 001999

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: COLOMBIAN SENATORS INVESTIGATED IN
"FARC-POLITICAL" SCANDAL

SUMMARY

11. (U) In the most recent development in the "FARC-political" scandal, Colombian Inspector General Alejandro Ordonez announced on June 10 the opening of preliminary investigations against Colombian senators Piedad Cordoba, Wilson Borja and Gloria Ines Ramirez. Ordonez said the investigations are based on information obtained from deceased FARC Secretariat member Raul Reyes' laptops, and noted that more investigations could follow. The Colombian police earlier presented a report to the Supreme Court implicating the three senators, which could potentially lead to criminal charges. The opposition senators have denied the charges and allege the investigations are politically motivated. The Supreme Court has criminal jurisdiction over sitting legislators. End Summary.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS OPENED

12. (U) On June 10, Colombian Inspector General (Procurador) Alejandro Ordonez announced the opening of preliminary investigations of three Colombian opposition senators for alleged links to the FARC. The cases have been referred to as the "FARC-political" scandal. The three under investigation are Liberal Party senator Piedad Cordoba and Democratic Polo Party senators Wilson Borja and Gloria Ines Ramirez. "Semana" magazine reported on June 11 that Ordonez's office had also opened preliminary investigations against Polo senator Jorge Enrique Robledo and Bogota city-councilman and Communist Party member Jaime Caicedo.

13. (U) Ordonez said the cases are based on information obtained from deceased FARC Secretariat member Raul Reyes' laptops which were recovered by the GOC in the March 2008 raid on Reyes' camp. He noted that he could potentially suspend the lawmakers if his office concludes that they went too far in their contacts with the FARC. Ordonez added that other individuals, including more congressman, may be subject to investigation.

14. (U) "El Tiempo" reported on June 14 that the Colombian police and the Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) delivered an extensive report to the Supreme Court on April 21 alleging that these individuals had collaborated with the FARC. If the Supreme Court finds that there is enough proof to substantiate these charges, a criminal investigation could be opened for rebellion. "Semana" magazine reported that the

Supreme Court initially reviewed evidence implicating a total of 10 members of congress, but the Court concluded that there was only enough evidence to proceed against Cordoba, Borja and Ramirez. The Court is expected to make a decision on these cases in the coming weeks.

THE CHARGES

15. (U) "El Tiempo" also reported that the Fiscalia suspects that Cordoba is the "Teodora Bolivar" referred to in several e-mails sent to Raul Reyes relaying strategic GOC information and plans. Police investigators noted the similarity of timing and acts between alias "Teodora" and Cordoba. Wilson Borja is accused of receiving funds from the FARC to attend international events, and Ramirez is accused of meeting with the FARC and with Fensuagro members sympathetic to the FARC.

DENIALS

16. (U) Cordoba denied that she was "Teodora," noting that she had always acted legally in her role as a humanitarian mediator, and affirming that she would cooperate fully with any investigation. She later called the case a "farce" and suggested that she may have been targeted because she did not support the nomination of Ordenez. Cordoba also noted that her political positions for peace and reconciliation "annoy some sectors." Ramirez also denied the charges, arguing that she could not be tried simply for being a leftist. She said she opposes the armed struggle and conceded that she has participated in humanitarian talks.

17. (U) Wilson Borja denied having corresponded with Raul

Reyes or any other members of the FARC, and said that he was being politically persecuted. In a heated congressional debate with the ex-Prosecutor General (Fiscal) Mario Iguaran, Borja insinuated that the Fiscalia was not impartial. Iguaran responded that "I hope that you don't say the court is also not impartial when they order your arrest."

URIBE CRITICAL OF JUDICIAL "IMPUNITY"

18. (U) President Uribe has repeatedly criticized what he calls the Court's slow approach to the "FARC-political" cases, contrasting them with the more than 60 convictions in the "para-political" scandal. Still, "Cambio" magazine on June 18 observed that whereas in the para-political scandal there were numerous supporting confessions, testimony and documentary proof, in the case of the "FARC-political" scandal the proof hinges almost entirely on e-mail exchanges. Brownfield